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000 of the milkmen began at once to retrace the long uphill journey from the city's outskirts to the village.

576 Sometimes I overtook these men outside the village and fell in with them.‡ *"Dobra stiga"* ("Well-reached"), I said; and they answered, *"Dal ti bog dobro"* ("God has given you good"). The [822] amenities observed, I then asked about other matters. "How far is it from Sofia to your village?" Always the answer came in terms of "walking hours" and never in kilometers, the accepted measure of distance in Bulgaria. When we would encounter those going in the opposite direction we stopped our conversation long enough to say, *"Dobra sreshta"* ("Well-met"). When I chanced to inquire about the size of Dragalevtsy, the usual answer was, "About three [161] hundred houses." If I wanted to know how many inhabitants this would mean, I multiplied the figure by five, the size of the average household. (The difference between this crude estimate of fifteen hundred and the 1934 census figures of 1,669 persons meant little to the peasant.)

000 No, Dragalevtsy was in no sense of the word a large village, as S[illegible] savants used to point out to me when they asked where I saw m[illegible]al enough there for a book. Theirs was the loss. An old village [illegible] more than sixteen hundred people teems with life. The stuff of which its days are made is rich and lasting; the intricate crisscross of vigorous personalities and deep-rooted folkways proved a never-ending drama for which nature usually provided a superb setting.

● 788 181 The meadows were lush from the spring rains, some of the fruit trees were in bloom, numberless tiny silver streams spread a glittering net down the side of Vitosha, and a veil of green leaves lay over all the red roofs of the village. Against such a background, a group of peasants made ready for their pilgrimage to Rila Monastery. Such an occasion was as truly an outpouring of joy as was the departure of the Canterbury pilgrims in Chaucer's day. The clanging of the church bell summoned the friends and relatives of the departing pilgrims to the incense-filled church. Inside, before the iconostas, dark and gilt, the priest read a prayer and led the little flock of people to the edge of the village, to the beginning of the outside world, where the

‡[i.e. milkman delivering their milk to Sofia -- Analyst]

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travelers, dressed in their brightest, newest garments, were speeded on their way. The friends and relatives loaded them with money and presents of clothing, food, and wool, which the pilgrims were to donate to the great and holy monastery. The whole ceremony of leave-taking was made a part of the bright landscape by the flowers everywhere—on the dress of the pilgrims, fastened to the gifts, and carried in huge bunches. Upon their return a few days later the dusty pilgrims were met at the outskirts of the village and escorted home through the blue twilight by those eager to hear of every adventure during the days and nights in the great mountains, whose jagged walls have protected Rila Monastery for hundreds of years.

Formal piety, as shown in pilgrimages, was only one of the major characteristics which these Bulgarian villagers possessed. The Dragalevtsy people, especially the men, were predominantly literate. Bulgaria, despite what seems a forbidding Cyrillic alphabet, has the highest rate of literacy of all Balkan countries, a fact which can be attributed to the tendency to regard education as a panacea for individual and social ills. While only 44 per cent of the women over fifteen years of age could read and write, 92 per cent of the men were literate. Of course, I often came upon groups of peasants crowded around a friend slowly spelling out a newspaper article aloud, but these little clusters of attentive listeners originated because of the scarcity of newspaper subscribers, not necessarily because of illiteracy.

The Dragalevtsy people were also law-abiding. During the first three years I knew the village, and informants said that the record went much farther back than that, no Dragalevtsy peasant had been taken to Sofia for imprisonment. There was no local jail, nor any need for one. This was not a sign of the inefficiency of local police, but rather an indication of the peaceable and honest traits of the people.

In many other characteristics the villagers shared what have come to be known as the universal "rural virtues," for theirs was an agrarian way of life. More than three-fourths of the family heads were peasant proprietors. In addition to these, there were two other occupational groups: the intellectuals and the artisans. Despite their small number, the intelligentsia, as they were called by the peasants, were the most influential group in the community. Whenever the

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Epiphany or Bogoyavlenie on January 19 commemorated the baptism of Christ. The Dragalevtsy boys and girls knew how the day was celebrated in other villages near the rivers or the sea. There the altar cross was thrown into the icy water. Naked youths dove in and struggled violently for it. The winner, carrying the cross, then collected money from the crowd. More important even than the money was the feeling that he would be fortunate during the coming year. But Epiphany did not pass unnoticed in Dragalevtsy, even though the river was nothing more than a racing mountain brook. The priest brought the cross out to sell at auction. The buyer, of course, returned it to the priest, but with his purchase received the assurance of God's blessing in the days to come. One year, a hiker happened to be passing through on his way up to the top of Vitosha. He saw the crowd gathered around the priest, bought the cross, went to the tavern for a free drink, returned the cross to the priest, and went on his way up the mountain. Peasants marveled for some time afterwards over the dispatch he showed in the whole affair.

Formerly on this day, children were christened with cold instead of lukewarm water, and all brides of that year were bathed in the river. When I asked why such custom was no longer practiced, Bai Angel, the village registrar, shrugged: "Oh, then the people were stronger and could stand such treatment."

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On the previous day the children had all awaited the priest's arrival to sprinkle holy water in every room of the house. As we have already seen, many families collected bottles of the water that had been especially blessed for Epiphany, in the belief that it would cure various illnesses later on.

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Bulgarian boys and girls never celebrated their birthdays. Instead, they made much of their name days. Each child bore the name of some saint, with a special day on the church calendar. Each Ivan (John) celebrated on the day following Epiphany, January 20; each Grigor (Gregory) on February 7; each Iliya (Elijah) on August 2. And so it ran throughout the year. Those with names not appearing on the calendar generally chose the day of "The Forty Holy Martyrs." Whereas Americans would expect to receive gifts on their birthdays, Bulgarians, especially those who were married, expected to entertain

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156 turn to Sofia for employment and sympathy. But the significant fact is that
702 most young people do submit to the process of resocialization and as they grow older adopt the conservatism of their elders. In other words, no attempt is made in the army experience to teach them new farming methods, bee-keeping, animal breeding, or anything else which they might apply in a useful way upon their return to the village.

554 3. For the Good of His Soul. When asked "Why do you go on pil-
● 788 grimages to various Bulgarian monasteries?" the peasants often answer: "We
484 go for the good of our souls." No mention is made of the enhanced social status that is theirs as a result of such a trip or the excitement of being sped on their way at the edge of the village by the priest and a flock of relatives or welcomed back far outside the village by the same relatives two or three days later. The most popular place to visit is Rila Monastery, the historic, magnificent establishment in the heart of the Rila Mountains to which thousands come at Easter time. The Dragalevtsy peasants (only thirty-five from the village went in 1934) mix with the assembled multitudes at Rila, attend the services, buy sacred objects, and snatch what sleep they can before starting on the return journey. If they are walking, the pilgrimage requires five or six days; if they go by automobile from Sofia, they spend one day en route each way. In olden days pilgrimages played a great part in creating social contacts between the villages and the outside world. Now we can safely conclude that as other means of making social contact increase, the importance of making pilgrimages decreases.

484 4. To Visit Socially. Once a year a Bulgarian village has an "At Home
574 Day." This event always falls on the name day of the saint, angel, or member of the Trinity for whom the local church is named and is commemorated by the preparation of immense quantities of stews for the few hundred guests from outside. Many of these guests are old residents returning with their families for a visit. There is a special service at which bread and boiled corn is blessed, the priest in return receiving a portion of the food. At the meal afterwards, to which all guests are invited, pledges are made for the upkeep of the local church. Many guests would rather go to the homes of friends and relatives than partake of the common meal; this makes more intimate visitation possible. These "At Homes" of neighboring villages are the chief attractions drawing the peasants from Dragalevtsy to other villages. Table 13 on the following page shows us how often Dragalevtsy family heads visit other villages (for the "At Home" as well as other purposes).

484 Combining the data in this table with other information obtained we can make the following conclusions regarding the social visits of Dragalevtsy people to other villages: